Dr. James I. Armstrong

cc Mrs. Elizabeth B. Kelly
Dean Dennis O'Brien

Freshman Housing

September 16, 1969

Erica Wonnacott

To answer more fully your question on the stairs: yes, the freshman black girls are on the same corridor in Battell enter, but, no, they are in no sense segregated nor are they with black roommates, nor is it a "black corridor".

There are 23 girls on the corridor and four are black. Originally there were but 3 blacks (the 4th being a September admission and placed simply where there was a space). It seemed to me, in July when I was placing freshmen, a kind of tokenism that I abhor to place each of our three black freshmen in separated sections of the Battells and in these days of black consciousness and unity a more natural thing to place them reasonably near each other where communication and social gathering would be facilitated.

This was done with some forethought on my part. Black students and a black administrator who is a friend have spoken heatedly to me in criticism of tokenism in predominantly white colleges.

I might add that I have also placed girls whose dominating interest is horses reasonably near each other, and those who have participated in out-ward bound programs. In general in the dormitories there is an effort to find some common bond around which to group students. Blackness seems to me a common bond.

I sense that you anticipate some difficulty from the B.S.M.U. and if so, please place it squarely at my feet because it was absolutely my decision, and one which I am very willing to defend. Indeed, it seemed to me so entirely normal and right that it didn't occur to me to discuss it with anyone. I do apologize however if this decision has caused distress in any quarter.

Enclosed is a diagram of Battell Center, 1st floor with x marks in the four double rooms where the four black girls are housed.

EW